

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated March 20, 2007. In view of the foregoing amendments and following representations, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

By the above amendment, claims 1-14 are cancelled and replaced with new claims 15-30. Thus, claims 15-30 are currently pending in the present application.

Next, to facilitate the Examiner's reconsideration of the application, the specification and abstract have been reviewed and revised in order to make a number of minor clarifying and other editorial amendments. A substitute specification and abstract has been prepared. No new matter has been added. Also enclosed is a "marked-up" copy of the original specification and abstract to show the changes that have been incorporated into the substitute specification and abstract.

On page 2 of the Office Action, claims 1-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. In response, claims 1-14 have been rewritten as new claims 15-28. Each of the new claims has been carefully drafted to ensure compliance with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph and to more clearly define the novel features of the present invention. Note that the language considered indefinite by the Examiner has been avoided in the new claims. Accordingly, it is submitted that the rejection of the original claims is overcome by the presentation of the new claims.

Next, on pages 3-5 of the Office Action, the original claims are rejected as follows:

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Holland (U.S. Patent No. 4,648,233); and

Claims 7 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Holland in view of Minenko (U.S. Patent No. 4,459,760).

It is submitted that the present invention, as embodied by the new claims, now clearly patentably distinguishes over the Holland and Minenko references for the following reasons.

The present invention is directed to a medicine envelope feeder that prevents medicines housed in an envelope from leaking or being discharged outside of the envelope while being transported. The feeder is arranged to bend or fold an upper part of the medicine envelope over an upper portion of a support member, see for example Figs. 3(a) to 3(d). In contrast to the applied prior art references, the envelope feeder of claims 15 and 21 closes the upper end of the medicine envelope by overlapping the upper end portion over the support member and engaging the folded portion with a vertically movable holding member, even though the envelope is filled with medicine containers. In particular, claim 15 requires, *inter alia*:

a support member for supporting one face of a medicine envelope storing injection medicine containers so that an upper end portion of the medicine envelope can be bent over an upper end of the support member;

a vertically movable holding member comprising a guide part for guiding an opposite face of the medicine envelope, and a pressing part which is vertically movable along the guide part and can be lowered for pressing the folded upper end of the medicine envelope along the support member,

wherein at least a coefficient of friction of the pressing part is larger than that of the support member, so that only the medicine envelope can be raised while being held between the guide part and the pressing part when the holding member is raised.

Holland discloses an apparatus for handling liquid “filled” bags. Each of the bags however has a capped spout 108 through which the bag is filled with a liquid. Thus, the handling of the bags in the environment of Holland is quite different in relation to the present invention. In particular, in Holland a bag transporting means 120 and a bag gripper means 122

grips the filled bag and transports it to a drop-off location 124 (see col. 4, line 40 to col. 5, line7).

Thus, it is clear that Holland does not include a vertically movable holding member comprising a guide part for guiding an opposite face of the medicine envelope, and a pressing part which is vertically movable along the guide part and can be lowered for pressing the folded upper end of the medicine envelope along the support member. Furthermore, since the bag in Holland is not folded or pressed against the support member, there is nothing that would correspond to the requirement that the pressing part has a coefficient of friction that is larger than that of the support member, so that only the medicine envelope can be raised while being held between the guide part and the pressing part when the holding member is raised. Applicant has reviewed col. 4, line 17 to col. 5, line 47 of Holland, but cannot find any disclosure of a pressing part having a coefficient of friction that is larger than that of a support member. In the present invention, the relative coefficients of friction are necessary to permit the holding member to pull the upper folded end of the bag off of the support member. Note that the nip rollers of claim 21 perform the pressing and holding functions. In view of the above, it is submitted that Holland does not meet each and every limitation of claims 15 or 21, and therefore cannot anticipate these claims under 35 U.S.C. 102(b).

Minenko discloses a device for gripping and hoisting packed sacks. There is no structure in Minenko that supports the sacks in the manner required in claims 15 and 21. The Examiner considers the contrivance 1 of Minenko to correspond to the claimed support member. However, the support member of claims 15 and 21 functions to support one face of a medicine envelope so that an upper end portion of the medicine envelope can be bent over an upper end of the support

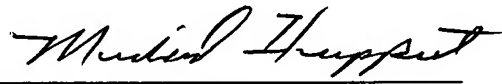
member. The contrivance of Minenko does not support the sacks while a pressing member presses the folded upper end of the medicine envelope along the support member. Accordingly, the teachings of Minenko do not supply the features that are lacking in Holland. Therefore, it is submitted that the present invention, as defined in claims 15 and 21 of the present invention, is not disclosed nor suggested by the collective teachings of the Holland and Minenko patents.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the present application is now clearly in condition for allowance. The Examiner therefore is requested to pass this case to issue.

In the event that the Examiner has any comments or suggestions of a nature necessary to place this case in condition for allowance, then the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney by telephone to promptly resolve any remaining matters.

Respectfully submitted,

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